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for SUPERVISORS
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On Personnel Management

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from the Director of Personnel

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON
May 1963

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL

To the Supervisor:
The Federal Salary Reform Act is a most important personnel legislative accomplishment.

"Pay comparability" provisions better enable the Department to compete with private industry for the employment of the "quality" applicant.

To motivate, give recognition to and to retain the quality employee is our next big task. It has been made easier by two additional incentive ideas in the Federal Salary Reform Act.

(1) Establishing a direct relationship between salary increases within the grade and performance at an acceptable level of competence, and

(2) Making available an additional within grade increase for those who give "high quality" performance.

There is a direct responsibility imposed on you, the supervisor, to use these incentives as they are intended. That responsibility is to recommend only those who merit this recognition and to withhold it from those whose performance fail to meet the required levels of competence.

Even where it is necessary to withhold a within grade increase, the supervisor has a responsibility. He must make every reasonable effort to help the employee improve his performance or explore opportunities which may better utilize the employee's interest, aptitudes and capabilities.

Use these tools wisely, fairly, and consistently.

Carl B. Barnes
Carl B. Barnes
Director of Personnel

MARGINAL
LEVEL...





The Role of the Supervisor

King Solomon in all his wisdom never had it so good. All he had to do — to judge whose baby was which woman's — was to use a little strategy.

But not to diminish his triumph, it must be admitted he first had to make the judgment that strategy was his best bet.

In somewhat the same situation does the supervisor find himself who has to judge whose within-grade increase belongs to what employee under a new provision in the 1962 Federal Salary Reform Act.

And in so doing, he has to use more than just strategy in judging an acceptable level of competence before he may triumph.

The new Federal Pay Reform Act of 1962 provided several important pay administration concepts. Among these were two of special importance to you, the supervisor:

- 1) Within-grade increases must be earned through performance on the job at an acceptable level of competence.
- 2) High-quality performance may be recognized through an additional within-grade increase.

No longer will within-grades be based solely upon length of service and satisfactory performance ratings, as previously.

It used to be that each employee on the job was paid substantially the same amount. It made no difference if his work was fair, good, or very good. He advanced on the basis of a satisfactory performance rating. The few exceptions were those who received rewards under the Incentive Awards Program or who were separated during probationary period or through adverse action.

At this point we might well remind ourselves of the moral in old Aesop's fable of "The Tortoise & The Hare."

Let us not be bemused by the dashing and daring antics of Mr. Hare who has it on the ball, but falls asleep at the switches and overlooks the unglamorous Mr. Tortoise who plugs hard at it and wins the race!

The transition from "time in grade and satisfactory performance" to the new principle of "time in grade and acceptable level of competence" may not appear to be tremendously significant. But actually you — the supervisor — now have the opportunity to reward or penalize the employee directly by recommending or withholding his within-grade promotion.



Since both within and "extra" grade promotions are not automatic but linked to job performance, there is a powerful motivation to the employee to perform his tasks to the best of his ability. But it is you who must make this incentive tool work.

Though the words of Edmund Spenser "All for love, and nothing for reward" may be high-sounding and idealistic to some ears they fall mighty short of appreciation to a hard-working employee looking toward recognition.

You, his supervisor, must exercise mature, fair and consistent judgment of each employee's performance or this motivation is soon dulled.

Recognition to the employee, whose performance is deserving of recognition, may be made through promotion within the grade or by quality increases under the high-quality performance provisions of the Pay Act. The performance contribution provisions of the Incentive Awards Program and other honors may likewise be used.

While the positive aspects to the program are stressed, the fact cannot be overlooked, that those employees whose performance on the job does not measure up to the acceptable level of competence will be denied within-grade promotions. But even here a positive effort to help the employee improve his performance is necessary.

What Yard Stick?

"No doubt the cherubs earn
their wage
Who wind each ticking star."
--Don Marquis

If you are to measure performance, you must know the job and establish an adequate criteria against which the per-

formance of the individual may be appraised. You are probably well acquainted with written performance criteria (standards) and have provided them for positions under your supervision.

You found the writing of a good standard was difficult and time consuming.

You probably also found that it was a worthwhile effort.

Now you know precisely what is required in the jobs you supervise.

Your performance criteria was spelled out in sufficient detail to be understood by the employee and was defined in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness or manner in which the essential tasks were to be performed. (If you are not familiar with setting job criteria, obtain help from your Personnel Office)

"All things are as difficult
as they are rare."

--Benedict Spinoza

The performance criteria must not only be made known to the employees, but the employee or group of employees affected by these standards should be consulted:

- at the time that the standard is established
- whenever changes in program functions or operations require a change in the standard
- whenever required by the employee to assure continued and consistent understanding of what is expected.

In analyzing the job, identify essential tasks, i.e., the requirements that are critical in distinguishing between effective and ineffective performance. Be sure to advise the employee that these are the elements that will be rated in



determining whether or not he has met the acceptable level of competence.

Applying the Yardstick

''A fair day's-wages for a fair day's-work'; it is as just a demand as governed men ever made of governing. It is the everlasting right of man."

--Thomas Carlyle

Appraising the performance of the employee is a continuing process. It requires review of the employee's demonstrated performance on the job and the comparison of that performance with the criteria. It gives you the opportunity to commend work that is well done as well as to correct deficiencies in performance.

The performance must be formally appraised only when required to document the acceptable level of competence. But, to do an effective job, the appraisal must be continuous. After all, the information developed on an employee serves us in many ways. Schematically, it looks like this:

Appraisal of the employee's performance on the job is used by the supervisor for:

- Determination of level of competence.
- Determination of training needs
- Determination of awards and honorary consideration
- A factor in determining promotion potential

P.S. Don't forget to reread Tips to Supervisors entitled "How To Judge Employee Performance" dated November 1962.

Fulfilling the Supervisory Role

Performance appraisal provides the basis for determining the acceptable level of competence. As such, it has a great importance to the employee. You must make it with fairness, understanding, and, above all, full knowledge of the employee's performance.

"I ran across a Prejudice
That quite cut off The View."

--Charlotte Perkins
--Stetson Gilman

Supervisors are the key to whether or not this program will succeed. Unless the supervisor reviews the employee's performance on the job with fairness, consistency and accuracy, the evaluation becomes worthless. Properly used, the program will be accepted by management at every level and by each employee. It will help assure increased efficiency, productivity, utilization and recognition of those employees who are positively motivated to apply their skills, abilities and interests to the work performed.

Formalizing the Measurement.

"Lest too light
winning make the
prize light."
--Wm. Shakespeare

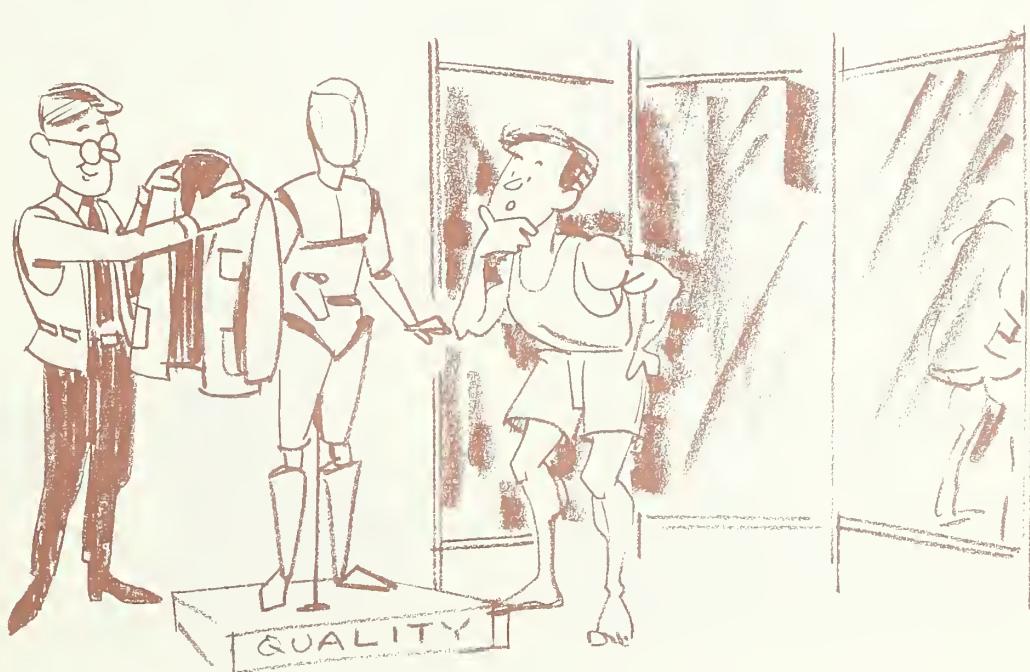
In addition to meeting the length of creditable service requirement, the employee's performance must be certified as meeting the acceptable level of competence. This

certification is the responsibility of the supervisor. You may not abrogate your responsibility to rate each employee under your supervision. In the event you are unfamiliar with the employee's work, discuss it with his previous supervisor. If no immediate prior supervisor is available and you have just moved into the unit, consult with your supervisor.

Normally, you will be given sufficient time to arrive at a determination of the employee's level of competence. Prior to the certification due date, a notification will be received from your personnel office that a certification on the employee will be due within 90 days.

Whenever an original determination or redetermination is being made of the meeting of the acceptable level of competence, the following is extremely important. The determination should be:

- (1) based upon the employee's performance during the waiting period;
- (2) made near the end of the waiting period; and



(3) made as of the completion of the waiting period. (The waiting period refers to the 52, 104 or 156 weeks required between within-grade increases)

The Caution Signal

Appropriate advance notification (60 days) should be given to employee whose performance does not meet or may fall below the acceptable level of competence. Be sure to make a record of the date and substance of your discussion with the employee. Offer the employee reasonable assistance so that he may correct deficiencies in his performance.

Bear in mind that this is the formal 60-day notification. The conscientious supervisor will continuously review and counsel the employee whenever his work is becoming deficient.

Condition Red

Employees who do not meet the acceptable level of competence will not be certified for a within-grade increase. Even though there is a failure to give the employee timely notification that his work does not meet or may fall below the acceptable level, does not delay the determination. You should make your decision on the basis of the employee's actual performance. In this case, a new determination would be required 90 days from the date of the proper notification but not less than 90 following the date on which the employee completes his waiting period.

The Total Man is Measured on the Job.

Within-grade promotions will not be authorized while there is a proposed adverse action or investigation pending on an employee for inefficiency, delinquency or serious misconduct. Improper conduct

that affects job performance must always be considered.

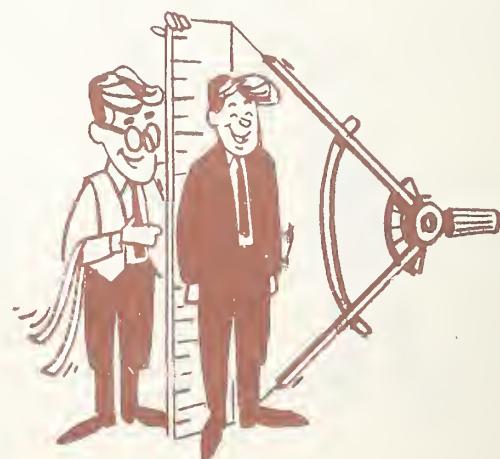
Whenever a within-grade promotion is withheld under these circumstances and the charges are subsequently resolved in the employee's favor (and provided the employee otherwise meets the conditions for a within-grade promotion), the promotion will be made effective as of the date originally due.

You may not always know that there is a pending investigation or action on one of your employees. Such information may be available only to the head of the office or the personnel office. Your agency will initiate safeguards to assure compliance with this requirement.

Rechecking our Measurements

"It takes a long time to bring excellence to maturity."
--Publilius Syrus

Because it is so important that performance evaluations be applied with fairness and consistency, some review responsibility is necessary to assure that these attributes characterize this program. The review level will vary among



agencies due to their geographical dispersion and organization. However, as a minimum, there will be a review at the next higher level of supervision. This applies only to the case in which the supervisor is recommending that the within-grade promotion be withheld.

The Rights of the Employee

An employee may request reconsideration of the initial decision to withhold a within-grade promotion. His request must be submitted within ten days of receipt of the notification that the within-grade increase has been withheld.

Reconsideration of the original decision to withhold a within-grade promotion must be made, as a minimum, at the next higher level by a supervisor who has not participated in the previous decision.

The employee will be given the opportunity to present either orally or in writing the reasons he believes the decision should be reversed. Employees in exercising this reconsideration right are granted a limited appeal right.

Full grievance appeal procedures may only be used where unfairness, discrimination or bias is charged.

The fact that your decision will be reviewed and conceivably reversed on occasion, may make you hesitate to recommend that a within-grade promotion be withheld. It should influence you to consider the employee's performance very carefully. But then, you should proceed with your best judgment.

The Fullest Measure

The Federal Pay Reform Bill provided two methods of recognizing competence on the job. The first of these is the acceptable level of performance and the second is recognition of high-quality per-

formance by the employee through an additional within-grade increase.

"The laborer is
Worthy of his hire."
--Luke X: 7

Some documentation is necessary to sustain your recommendation of high-quality performance. The best documentation is that which you gathered and used in comparing the employee's performance with the performance criteria. If this is not in useable form, prepare a brief, but substantive statement to make clear how the performance is considered to have substantially exceeded the performance requirements.

- Use statistical examples for qualitatively and quantitatively appraised tasks
- Cite statements of others with whom the employee comes in official contact
- Relate incidents that are supportive of the quality performance.

You must also certify that on the basis of past experience the employee's high-quality performance is likely to be sustained at this high level in the future. It is not suggested that you use a crystal ball. The employee's performance at the high level should be over a sufficiently long period to warrant the expectation that it will continue at this level in the future. Remember, the additional within-grade increase is not proper for either the special act or short-term performance.

Consistency--A Must

Because of the very direct relationship between within-grade promotions resulting from quality performance, cash awards for superior performance and outstanding performance ratings under the Incentive Awards Program, and other honorary award recognition programs, recommendations for quality increases shall be reviewed. The precise nature of this review is left to your agency's discretion.

The Department holds that, as a minimum, this must be at the next higher level of supervision. Some agencies may desire that this review be made by the head of the office or the division.

The review is aimed primarily to assure consistency in the granting of these awards.

Quality Increase or Recognition under the Incentive Awards Program

The primary guideline in determining whether or not an employee shall be awarded a within-grade promotion for quality performance or a lump sum award under the Incentive Awards Program will be which approach provides the greatest advantage to the employee.

Quality within-grade promotions are normally continuing in benefit and therefore, would normally account for most sustained types of superior performance. However, certain factors need to be considered:

(1) Are there tangible savings or intangible benefits which would, if con-

sidered separately, substantially increase the cash award that could be made under the Incentive Awards Program?

- (2) Would the quality increase be limited to an insufficient length of time due to impending promotion in grade, retirement, separation for other reasons, etc.?
- (3) If the employee is at the top of his grade or a wage board or other exempt employee, the incentive award will always be the most appropriate.

Within these guidelines, you, the supervisor, have the opportunity:

- (1) To be a leader and motivator of the employees under your supervision,
- (2) To give proper recognition for the job well done,
- (3) To withhold salary increases for performance that does not meet the acceptable level of competence,
- (4) To increase the effectiveness of your employees through better interest, understanding, and motivation.

The tools are available--use them.

